



**(U//FOUO) DIA - Swimming Upstream in the SIGINT System**

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(TS//SI) Until recently, few would suspect that the [International Organizations Branch](#) (Office of Regional Targets) and DIA's Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center (AFMIC) have good reason to collaborate. Co-located with the U.S. Army's bio-weapons research facility at Fort Detrick, Maryland, AFMIC's primary mission is to prepare all-source medical intelligence, largely in support of force health protection. The International Organizations Branch exploits and reports the communications of non-governmental (NGO) and treaty monitoring organizations worldwide.

(TS//SI) What do AFMIC and the International Organizations Branch have in common? Quite a lot. Several international NGOs regularly report outbreaks of infectious diseases; recent high profile examples include SARS in China, cholera in Liberia, and dysentery, polio, and cholera in Iraq - topics of great interest to AFMIC and by extension, the Intelligence Community. Homegrown expertise and sufficient resources at NSA to process medical SIGINT are scarce however, and as a result, unique and valuable medical intelligence - especially on lower threshold topics - may go unreported.

(TS//SI) Once apprised in late 2002 of the limitations that prevent NSA from aggressively reporting medical SIGINT, AFMIC quickly offered to detail a technical expert in epidemiology part-time to help address this intelligence gap. At the same time, the Target Office of Primary Interest (TOPI) worked closely with NSA's [Office of Oversight and Compliance](#), the [Office of General Counsel](#), and others to address concerns about part-time integration. The AFMIC analyst arrived in April 2003, took several NCS reporting courses and was ready for action by early May. After being indoctrinated in USSID 18 and EO 12333, he was allowed access to unminimized SIGINT data (or raw traffic) in select databases, and began authoring reports almost immediately.

(TS//SI) The timing of the integree's arrival, as it coincided with a worldwide SARS epidemic, could not have been better. While the quality of NSA reporting on SARS last spring was already high, ready access to an in-house expert on infectious diseases who could effectively field analysts' questions was tremendously beneficial. In addition, the partnership has generated unique SIGINT reporting that supports the larger DoD and Intelligence Communities, an overall refinement of the TOPI's efforts against complex public health targets, and a heightened awareness among SID analysts of the value of medical SIGINT. Furthermore, his efforts to develop related topics will inform and facilitate future endeavors to exploit medical intelligence in the International Organizations Branch.

(U//FOUO) In today's high-volume and highly specialized SIGINT environment, NSA must engage its partners to make maximum use of community analytic resources. Transformation 2.0 underscores the imperative to team with analytic experts across the community to ensure responsive intelligence information for national decision-makers and military commanders. By allowing customers with unique expertise to "swim upstream," and become active participants in creating SIGINT products and services, NSA will have one more tool to effectively manage today's information overload. In closing, we urge you to be on the lookout for similar opportunities to engage your analytic counterparts in all aspects of collaboration and information sharing. Follow your instincts and share your ideas with the experts at NSA. The pay-offs will be tremendous.

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